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HUNTING BIG GAME IN THE SIERRAS OF CHIHUAHUA



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BY
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MANSFIELD, OHIO

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HUNTING BIG GAME
IN THE
SIERRAS OF CHIHUAHUA

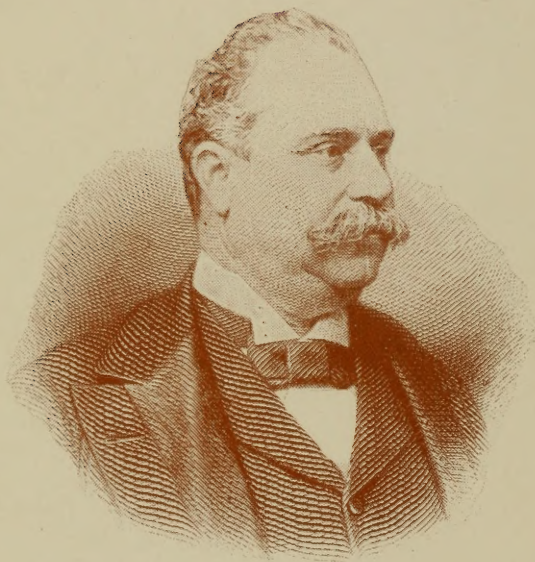


WRITTEN BY
DONALD A. CARPENTER

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GOVERNOR CREEL
 OF CHIHUAHUA

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TO MEXICO'S EMINENT STATESMAN
ENRIQUE CREEL
GOVERNOR
OF THE
STATE OF CHIHUAHUA
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED



FOREWORD

IN the preparation of this volume, I was not actuated by the belief that it would receive recognition because of any literary value, nor had I the temerity to even hope that a perusal of its pages would suggest to the reader the possibility of the author's possessing undeveloped literary genius.

In reviewing the delightful experiences and happy incidents of our two weeks' ramblings in the great Sierras, it is not with the thought, or even remote ambition, that the reader will be charmed by classic style or rhetorical embellishments, but with the hope that I may be able to convey to him, even though imperfectly, something of the keen enjoyment of outdoor life when hunting big game, and the infinite pleasure experienced when surrounded on every hand by mighty evidences of nature's most sublime and magnificent works.

To those whose spirit calls them to the wild, and in the fastnesses of the forest depths or among the crags and peaks of the mountains finds harmony with nature and nature's God, I commend this little volume.

PARTE ONE

IF the reader, on October 23, 1905, about eight o'clock in the morning, had been standing at the United States end of the International Bridge which joins El Paso with Ciudad Juarez, he would have recognized a hunting party rapidly approaching, the objective point of which was evidently somewhere beyond the Rio Grande.

Piled in an express wagon were boxes, bedding and general camp equipment, on the top of which the writer and his friends were vainly trying to maintain their equilibrium as the Mexican driver urged his team over the rough road towards "Mañana land."

The "Rio Grande, Sierra Madre and Pacific" train we were to take to Casas Grandes, where we would outfit for the hunting grounds, was due to leave at nine o'clock, and as it was now eight, with the ordeal of the customs' inspection before us, we were somewhat uneasy lest the Mexican customs officials would delay the inspection of our equipment so we would miss our train. As the business of the Sierra Madre road does not justify running trains but three times a week, and our time was limited, this would indeed have been a calamity.

We were soon across the river and in charge of the customs' guards, who, after much discussion, profound consideration and a delay equal to one-third of the remaining hour before train time, finally decided ours was

an unusual case, and that we could only be inspected properly at the Aduana (custom house). Therefore, accompanied by a guard, we were conducted to said establishment and presented to an official who searched our baggage, unrolled our bedding, delved into the bottom of our provision boxes and then gravely questioned the advisability of allowing our arms to be passed, it being the ruling, it seems, to not allow guns or ammunition to enter the country without absolute assurance that they will not pass into the hands of rebellious Indians.

Time is of little consequence in "Mañana land," and the fact that we had less than forty minutes remaining before train time in which to complete the inspection, did not disturb our customs friend in the least, he assuring us when we suggested that matters be hurried somewhat, "that we would have more than ample time." But all things come to those who can patiently wait and not audibly "cuss," even in Mexico, and finally we persuaded our official friend that we were not bandits or in league with the Yaquis, and after suggesting our arms be registered in order that he might be assured of their return to the States, he decided we would be a "safe risk," issued our inspection credentials and allowed us to pass.

We reached the station in sufficient time, as the train was fortunately delayed, and were soon on our way to the country of bright anticipations and pleasant prospects, the home of the deer, mountain lion and bear, whose society we hoped to successfully cultivate the following two

weeks. At seven o'clock in the evening we arrived at Nueva Casas Grandes, one hundred and sixty-five miles from El Paso, and after an unmentionable and indigestible supper at a Chinese restaurant, started out to find Mr. Pink Robertson, an eminent citizen of the village, whose business is the retailing of spirituous liquors and the furnishing of transportation facilities and dogs to hunting parties.

We soon satisfactorily negotiated with "Pink" for mules, horses and saddles, but a satisfactory guide could not be found; consequently, instead of leaving the following morning bright and early for the hunting grounds, as we had anticipated, we consumed the entire day looking for a proper person, finally securing him at old Casas Grandes, some four miles away. After a game of "five hundred" and a sound sleep in a Chinese bed, the cleanliness of which we will not discuss, by the light of the morning star, at four o'clock we began preparations for the journey to the mountains.

Wednesday morning, by seven-thirty, we were on our way, with two mules loaded to the gunwales with good things to eat, and three horses carrying "shooting-irons," rain-proof coats and "Gringoes" surcharged with bright anticipations and iridescent dreams. Never was a morning more beautiful. The rainy season had just passed. The prairie grass had attained its full development and was slowly curing in the bright sunshine; every blade bore ornaments of dew, which, like diamonds, reflected



—“we were on our way”

all the colors of the rainbow. The blue sky merged into the brown Escondidas in the east and away off to the westward formed a rich background for the bright hued coloring of the peaks of the Grand Sierras. Nature seemed on every hand to be making a strenuous effort to portray the magnificence of her works. Flowers were blooming in variegated colors and giving forth sweet odors which were wafted across the prairie by the salubrious breezes. The feathered creatures were discussing domestic affairs among the trees on the river bank, and the mocking bird was singing his last encore before retiring for the day—truly a pleasing picture and one calculated to make the soul of man grateful for the privilege of enjoying the beautiful things of earth.

Our first day's journey seemed of interminable length, and though we traveled only from seven until five, with about an hour for lunch, I would, without the least hesitancy, have agreed to the proposition that the world stopped turning for a while, and we were in the saddle for at least twice as long a time. I had not ridden for years, and in nature's endeavor to adjust my anatomy to the saddle, it seemed at times as though my legs would crack and a new covering of flesh be immediately necessary to save the saddle leather from my bones, which were slowly but surely grinding their way down onto its hard surface. I would not have been surprised at any time during the day to have found myself destitute of lower limbs, they having broken off and fallen by the

wayside, leaving me as legless as a circus monstrosity. However, all things in this material world must end, and this day of excruciating experiences was no exception. The night came and we camped.

With painstaking effort I removed myself from the back of "Muchacho Negro," my horse, and by careful manipulation managed to adjust myself on a soft sand bank with my legs stretched out before me, my back against a rock and like Micawber, waited "for something to turn up." I had not long to wait, for I was soon reminded by the Treasurer and Manager of our party, that "as ye labor, so shall ye be rewarded," and that if we expected to satisfy the inner-man and prepare a place to sleep, we must get busy, and that mighty quick.

I shall never forget our first supper in the Las Tinajas Cañon. By the side of the Tinajas Creek, in the shelter of a large rock, we made our camp and prepared a meal—of beans, "sowbelly" and strong coffee—which certainly would have pleased the Gods, at least had they had as strenuous a day as we, and been as hungry. A man never knows his consuming capacity until he has had an opportunity to develop it by vigorous out-of-door life. He may, perhaps, imagine that nature has equipped him with digestive apparatus of small proportions, but in this he is mistaken. It is as susceptible of extension as a balloon, and unless he is unlike ordinary men, it practically has no limit. Food will disappear into it like iron ore into a whaleback, and the only thing that will cause him to

stop, is the fear that his reputation for decency will be questioned, or the limit of the frying pan and coffee pot. I will not dwell long on our first night in camp—the remembrance is too painful.

In order that we might save weight for the pack animals, we decided on leaving Casas Grandes to join bunks—that is, combine our bedding and sleep three in a bed. This would have been satisfactory had we not overlooked the fact that the ordinary army blankets, with which we were equipped, were not quite as wide as necessary for this purpose, and therefore, those sleeping on the outside, unless very careful, could not help occasionally, if very restless, but raise the edge of the blankets, letting in a fresh breath of frosty night air. It seemed as if nearly every muscle that had been stretched, distorted and pounded on the saddle during the day got between our bodies and the ground during the night, the consequence being we rolled and tumbled around, kicked and hammered each other, squeezed the fellow in the middle 'till he grunted like a porpoise, let in enough cold air under the covers to freeze an Esquimaux, and so finally wore out the night. The words that were said as we “butted” each other, and the expressions uttered in our dreams that night, will never be recorded—and it is well they should not. It is better that some things in life be forgotten quickly.

Let us draw the curtain and pass over our first night on Las Tinajas.

PART TWO

IMMEDIATELY upon leaving camp the following morning we started off to the southward, following an old trail and began climbing the mountains, having left the main traveled road in the Tinajas Cañon. We had not traveled far when we realized we were in game country, as deer tracks became plentiful, also signs of turkeys and bob cats. About noon we came to a beautiful little "valle seco" (dry valley) where deer signs were plentiful, and upon consultation with our guide, who advised us that water was near at hand, we decided to camp and spend a day or so hunting.

After dinner we separated, it falling to my lot to hunt off to the southeastward, the others going in the opposite direction. I had probably gone a quarter of a mile from camp, when I saw two bucks feeding two or three hundred yards distant. I dropped on one knee, using the other for a rest, took careful aim and fired. The deer acted as if he had been hit, but jumped behind some scrub oak and disappeared. Because the sights of my rifle were not correct and it therefore was shooting high, I decided that my shot had not mortally wounded the animal, it not being injured so severely but that it could easily get away, and I would probably have a long chase after it, if indeed I ever saw it again. What was my surprise on reaching a point near where the deer had been feeding, to find it lying in its last throes, my shot having passed entirely

through its vital organs. Probably a more surprised individual than I never lived. I had no idea my shot had been fatal, yet there was a fine big buck, the product of my skill (perhaps I should say luck) lying at my feet. I was so amazed at my success, and elated at my good fortune, that I became somewhat excited, and in the exuberance of my joy and satisfaction because of having proven my prowess as a hunter (I forgot at the moment it was mostly luck) I turned myself loose and yelled and cavorted around that deer like a Navajo Indian at a snake dance.

Finally the idea occurred to me that this exhibition of my gratification, while yielding me immense satisfaction, was not meeting the emergencies of the situation, and that the deer must be taken to camp. It never entered my mind to cut it's throat and dress it in order to lessen the weight, as I should have done immediately, but instead I tried to get it on my back, but to shoulder a big wobbly buck, which probably weighs fully 175 pounds is no easy task, and after several attempts it occurred to me that the best way to take the meat to camp would be to get a mule and pack it in.

After noting the location, as I supposed, so I might return to it without trouble, I hurried off to camp, advised Valentine of my good luck, had him put a pack saddle on a mule, and we started back to get the deer. After going some little distance, I indicated where I thought it was located, but what was my surprise and chagrin to find I

had in my excitement failed to note my bearings as carefully as I should have done, and the deer for the time being, was lost. We tied the mule to a tree and for nearly an hour thoroughly searched the surrounding woods, finally locating the deer about a quarter of a mile from the place we first looked for it. To the uninitiated it might seem strange that a person would thus easily lose his bearings, but if the reader has ever been out in the pathless woods where there are no landmarks, and positions must be determined from the relative location of the trees, he will easily understand how difficult it is to relocate a point, unless he approach it from the same direction from which he left it.

On our return to camp Valentine and I skinned and cleaned the deer ; that is, Valentine did most of the work and I stood by and made suggestions in my classical Spanish, which I could easily see required an earnest mental effort on his part, at times, to understand. The Mexican, however, is a most polite individual, and Valentine, being no exception, he would not for the world have indicated by word or deed, but that my Spanish was as understandable as a native's. We had completed our task and were preparing a suitable place to sleep when the Treasurer returned. While some distance away I fancied I noticed a look on his countenance of disappointment and supreme disgust. "What luck?" I asked. "None," said he, and continued, "I don't believe there is a deer in the whole — — country." "Plenty of them," said I,




—“on our return to camp”

"only it requires a little skill to get them." "Oh, h—l," he remarked, "give it to us easy." "Well," I responded, "I didn't find it any trouble to get a deer, and you might go over to that tree yonder and examine it—there it is."

I have seen many surprised individuals, but I think our Treasurer's countenance depicted more real surprise and perhaps chagrin at that moment, than I had ever seen before, and it was especially acute, perhaps, because of the fact that he had been recounting tales of his prowess as a hunter ever since we had started on the trip, and only the day before had insisted that when I saw my first deer I would experience "buck fever." So certain was he that he was correct in his prophecy, that he was willing to back it up with a substantial wager. Well, we are all liable to miss the mark at times as we go through life, especially so when betting against luck, and the Treasurer, after the shock wore off, sincerely congratulated me on my success and the camp on having fresh meat, of which we were sorely in need.

PART THREE

HE second night out was not so uncomfortable as the first. We traveled only a short distance during the day, not enough to distress us. The climate on the mountain top was much more agreeable than in the Tinajas Cañon, and we were becoming accustomed to sleeping on the ground.

Being desirous of starting early, I got up at four o'clock, made a large fire and prepared breakfast. I had no trouble in arousing the guide, he responding to my suggestion to awaken and arise without question, but not so with the Treasurer or the Photographer. They seemed to be completely lost in slumber, Morpheus for the time being, having removed them from earthly cares—not even the appetizing odor of the cooking venison or the aroma of the boiling coffee coupled with vehement urgings on my part disturbed them. Finally, after a period of pleading and expostulation, the Treasurer sleepily suggested, "I suppose the killing of that deer is responsible for all this racket and early rising, and, if Carpenter should kill a bear, presume he would sit up and cook bear steaks all night."

Valentine and I began to eat breakfast by the light of the big camp-fire, and eventually we were joined by our sleepy and disgruntled "compadres." Breakfast was finished and the camp put in order before daylight, and as the first rays of light began to lessen the brilliancy of

the morning star, we shouldered our rifles and started out for a hunt, which we hoped would be rewarded with at least one additional deer. We were to be disappointed however, and about nine o'clock returned to camp, packed up and started for a country some fifteen miles distant, where the guide informed us he had hunted deer successfully a year or so before.

But luck was not to be with us this day, for though we reached our destination early and hunted faithfully all the afternoon, our efforts were without result. Evidently something must be done. We were out for deer and must have them. Valentine was appealed to. He stated he knew of a certain locality, probably twenty miles distant, where he had been the year before with a hunting party, which had secured all the game wanted in two days, but the trail was very rough and it would probably require a day to go there. We decided that though our time was limited, it would be best to go further and take the chance of securing all the game wanted and could pack out in a short time, rather than perhaps none at all nearer civilization, where it had probably been hunted out. Accordingly we left early the following morning for the country Valentine had recommended, and by ten o'clock began to see deer signs, showing that we were certainly getting into a section where they were more plentiful.

In the afternoon we entered a very rough country, and descending by a steep and tortuous trail, which we at times feared would be disastrous to the pack mules, fin-

ally reaching a beautiful valley where we found abundant grass, magnificent timber, and a stream of pure ice cold water.

The rays of the afternoon sun, when we reached the trail at the bottom of the cañon, were beginning to play hide and seek between the peaks and crags of the mountain tops, and as the soft glow of the descending sun was reflected from the various hued rocks on the summits into the variegated verdure in the cañon's depths, which had been tinged with the autumn frosts, it presented a panorama of loveliness and grandeur which no artist could portray. For probably ten miles we rode through this dream of beauty. The leaves of the sycamores were changing to a bright yellow and the oaks were draped in scarlet. The willows blended their shades of variegated colors, and woven through and back of all was the rich dark green of the pine and hemlock.

In places the cañon narrowed down to a mere passageway through solid rock, the walls of which rose to stupendous heights and over the rock-paved floor the water rushed, through which we carefully found our way. Had we been so unfortunate as to have been caught in this place during a freshet or cloud-burst, which often occurs in the mountains, we would in all probability, have been drowned, as there was no possible chance of escape. We photographed our outfit at this point, and very properly named the cañon "Paseo del Diablo" (Pass of the Devil).



—“and very properly named the cañon ‘Paseo del Diablo’
(Pass of the Devil)”

About dusk our guide announced that we were near the "promised land," and soon he indicated a little side valley, where, he stated, his party had camped the year before, and near which they had found game in abundance. We immediately located a suitable place and made camp, but not before our Treasurer had the misfortune to receive from "Buckskin," his saddle-horse, an ugly and vicious kick, which caused him great distress for several days.

"Buckskin" was a mongrel any way you would size him up. He was chock full and loaded down with cussedness of the nastiest kind. He had a benign countenance and an enchanting eye of liquid loveliness that would win the affection and melt the heart of a savage. But woe betide him who placed his confidence in "Buck." He would stand on his front legs and kick at the clouds, just to keep in practice, and in the art of bucking, he was the "real thing." When the spirit moved him, he would rear up on his hind legs and knock off the fisher's hornpipe with the ease and grace of a professional, then he would reverse and whale away at the clouds; after a time would come down onto all four feet in a sort of stiff legged staccato movement that was warranted to shake a man's liver down into his boots, then end the performance, if he had failed to dismount his rider, with a look in those bewitching orbs of the deepest sorrow and humiliation. Surely "Buck" was a "corker," but as he sinned, so was he sinned against, and I believe if the Treasurer

had not felt it his duty and made it his especial business, several times each day, through severe discipline, to lead his horsheship into paths of rectitude, the Treasurer's disposition would certainly have been more amiable, and "Buck"—well, he had no virtues, and we might just as well not discuss him. It was his nature to be "ornery," and like some people he couldn't help it.

In memory of the contact of "Buck's" foot against the Treasurer's leg, we named this little valley in which we were camped, "Cañon de le Patada" (Cañon of the Kick).

PARTE FOUR



WE were now in good game country. Of this there could be no question, as the day before on our way up Marrano Cañon, we had seen mountain lion and deer tracks in abundance.

As there was to be considerable cooking done to put our larder in shape, we having exhausted our stock of bread which we brought with us, and as I had already killed a deer, I volunteered to remain in camp and make "flap-jacks," boil potatoes, fry venison, etc., while the other members of the party went hunting.

Bread, or perhaps I should say a substitute for bread, baked in a frying pan and made out of flour, baking powder, water and salt is known as a "flap-jack." Perhaps the reader has read Mark Twain's "Roughing It," or Richardson's "Life Beyond the Mississippi," and if so, he will remember the delightful and interesting sketches these authors give of "flap-jack" baking as it appealed to them. It is, to begin with, quite an art to mix in the proper proportions, the concoction from which the "jack" is made, and it is a greater art when the "jack" is sufficiently baked on one side, to loosen it with a slap of the pan on the ground and give it the proper twist, so that it will "flop" clear over and catch it, not losing it in the fire nor smashing it into a shapeless mass. My "jack" baking was progressing satisfactorily and it seemed that probably the camp would be mine for the day, and that I would



— *“the Treasurer and the Photographer rode into camp”*

not be disturbed until evening, when Valentine appeared and announced that he had seen several deer, and had succeeded in securing one. He took a horse and went for the deer, and soon after his return the Treasurer and the Photographer rode into camp, both on "Old Sorrel," the latter's horse, leading "Buckskin," on which was loaded four fine bucks, three having been shot by the former, the other by the latter.

We now had five whole deer and the larger part of another, all we could comfortably carry in addition to our provisions and bedding, and as we were averse to killing more than we could take away, we decided to leave the day following, for a point where we had seen numerous turkey signs on the way over, and gradually wend our way back towards Casas Grandes the latter part of the week.

It is needless to say, that after the strenuous exertions of the day on the part of the hunters, they were ready for the repast I had prepared for them. The "flap-jacks," which I am willing to admit, were of a specific gravity almost equal to lead, and would have made good bullets, had we ran short of ammunition, and in addition were thoroughly impregnated with ashes, disappeared as though the choicest product of culinary art. The beans, which we had boiled in the coffee pot, and were a little scorched and not as well done as might be desired, passed muster, while the boiled potatoes and venison, together with the coffee, strong enough to float an egg, completed

a repast never more enjoyed by the most fastidious epicure at Sherry's or Delmonico's.

I feel that I might properly digress here for a moment to speak especially of some of the characteristics of Valentine, our worthy guide. He belongs to and is a representative of the great class of Peons which constitutes the larger portion of the population of the Republic, and like all others of his caste, owns no home and has only a few personal effects. Valentine's life is one continuous round of poverty and drudgery, and though he occasionally guides hunting parties into the mountains, for which he receives fair pay, yet the greater portion of the time he barely manages to eke out an existence. As might be easily surmised, it is only by the most rigid economy and denial that he is able to support himself and his family.

Perhaps it was imagination on my part, but I fancied when I first saw Valentine, that he had a hungry look, and I am very sure I was not mistaken in the belief that his eyes ever and anon wandered fondly toward the provision boxes. Our first supper on the Tinajas proved that my surmises were correct. I am certain that for all the sacrifices to the "inner-man," which circumstances had compelled Valentine to make, since his last "square meal," he "broke even" at that time. He stuffed himself until he could hardly wink, then stood up and walked around camp for a time until nature had provided additional room, and then filled up again, keeping this up 'till the walls of his stomach must have been stretched

like a foot-ball inflated under heavy pressure. When so thoroughly packed full that he could scarcely breathe, to our repeated urgings that he was not doing himself justice and was certainly losing his appetite, he would regretfully complain that his stomach was "muy chiquita" (very small) and he could eat but little. However, if any good things were left over and we were camped for the day, he would tenderly set them aside to be disposed of when a little more space was available. But Valentine, notwithstanding his ravenous appetite, "made good," and had we not been so fortunate as to secure his services, we might have failed entirely, and instead of the pleasant memories of a successful trip, be now uttering anathemas against the country and our ill success.

After dinner, the game was gambreled and salted, and hung to a pine tree near the camp in order that it might become thoroughly chilled during the night and be in fit condition for transportation the day following.

Since leaving Casas Grandes we had enjoyed the most beautiful weather possible ; while it frosted every night and towards morning became quite cold, yet it was not disagreeable, and during the day we would often travel in our shirt sleeves, even in the higher altitudes. Now, however, we could feel that a change in the weather conditions was imminent. Clouds which certainly forbade a storm scurried across the sky, and often hung low or rested heavily on the mountain tops. A few drops of rain would occasionally fall and fitful blasts would make



—“the game was gambreled, salted and hung to a
pine tree near the camp”

their cold presence felt as they swirled through the cañons and arroyos. Because it was necessary to travel in "light marching order" we did not carry a tent with us, but only a tarpaulin, which we would place under the bedding on the ground and over us, it being long enough so that in case a sudden storm came upon us we could draw it over our heads, leaving a space open on the sides for fresh air. This answered very well in ordinary weather, but if we were to experience a heavy storm we must provide more adequate protection.

Fearing it would rain during the night, we set a pole about six feet long in the ground, and from a nearby tree stretched a rope, passing it over the top of the pole, it having been notched to receive it, and fastened the rope to a stake securely driven in the ground. Over the rope which acted as a ridge pole, we hung the tarpaulin, securely staking the edges, thereby making a very comfortable A-shaped tent, although open at both ends, but entirely efficient as a rain protection. Contrary to our expectation, it did not rain that night, and as the weather conditions were propitious the following morning, we decided we would hunt until mid-day, we still having carrying capacity in an emergency for an additional deer or two.

The hunters, the day before on their return to camp, had reported that near where they had secured their game they had beheld from the crest of the main range a magnificent view of a wide expanse of mountains and valleys. Being desirous of securing a picture of this

grand panorama, we decided to return and photograph it, taking our rifles with us of course, for use in case we should see game.

The summit, or "cumbre" as it is called in Spanish, of the main range was about three miles from camp and though the ride was arduous, the mountains being rocky and steep, it being necessary at times to allow the horses to rest, we finally reached the summit, and there we saw such a wonderful vision of grandeur and sublimity as probably few have been given the privilege to behold. Words are entirely inadequate to describe such a view as was presented to our sight. Far off to the westward, standing as mute guardian over its lesser brethern, was a chain of rugged peaks bathed in soft colors of violet tints, while near by ponderous works of the Creator's art draped in the emerald green of the pine forests, brought forth in vivid contrast the dark gray southwestern peaks. Off to the north, but nearerby, hills of alsation blue blended their colors with the variegated tints of the frost-tinged oaks and sycamores. We feasted our souls to overflowing with this grand and sublime panorama, then reluctantly mounted our horses and reverentially and regretfully started homeward.

We had now reached the western limit of our journey. From now on we would travel eastward until each had reached his own fireside, the guide at Casas Grandes, the Treasurer and Photographer in El Paso, and the writer in Mansfield, Ohio, more than two thousand miles away.

We had left the summit but a short distance behind, when on glancing ahead, I saw a deer intently watching us. His curiosity cost him his life. I rolled off "Muchacho Negro," seized my rifle, cautioned my companions to be quiet, dropped on my knee and fired. My shot passed entirely through the lungs and close to the heart, but even thus mortally wounded, he ran perhaps fifty yards before falling. We soon had the animal dressed and strapped to the back of the saddle and were again on the road to camp. After dinner the real work of the journey began. Heretofore, we had only to pack our provisions and bedding; now, in addition, we had six deer weighing probably seven hundred pounds and to distribute them to the best advantage on the pack animals and saddle horses, and fasten them so they would not become bruised and yet stay in place when traveling over the rough and steep trails was indeed a difficult and strenuous task.


Had we not been fortunate in having a man of the Treasurer's ability, who knew all the intricacies of the packer's art, and had his efforts not been ably supplemented by Valentine, who was nearly as efficient and dextrous as he, I fear we would perhaps have been compelled to leave some of our game behind. It was decided to load the cinnamon mule with the two small deer, hanging one on each side of the pack saddle, on top of which the bedding was placed. The black mule, which carried the "grub boxes," was delegated to carry in addition the largest deer: "Buckskin," "Muchacho Negro" and Valen-



—“ a wonderful vision of grandeur and sublimity ”

tine's horse each assumed the responsibility of transporting an animal behind the saddle of his rider. "Old Sorrel" was burdened with all the balance of the outfit we could not find a place for elsewhere, and thus equipped we took the trail and wended our way down through "Paseo del Diablo" and "Marrano Cañon" towards the San Pedro River and the prospective turkey grounds.

PART FIVE

HE ride down the cañon was, if possible, more interesting than the journey up had been a few days before. Signs of mountain lion were abundant on every hand and no doubt, had our time been sufficient, (and this is no attempt to excuse our courage) we could have enjoyed rare sport in hunting them, as they were undoubtedly plentiful in that vicinity. We passed the remains of a deer close to the trail, which we judged had been the victim of a lion, as it was lying at a point where they had left plentiful signs. The tracks were all large, showing that the animals were full grown. During the afternoon we saw a number of deer, and indeed the Photographer succeeded in getting into range of one, which he shot at but without result. About dusk we camped for the night, satisfied the inner-man with a bountiful supply of venison tenderloin, and retired to a well earned rest after a most interesting and strenuous day.

The following morning by eight o'clock we were again in the saddle, and after traveling an hour or so reached the San Pedro river, which we followed up for some distance, then struck off to the eastward, following an old trail which would ultimately lead us back to "four o'clock camp" as we called it, where we stopped the second night out and near where I killed my first deer. The morning was uneventful, except that the Treasurer and "Buckskin "

had a "falling out" which completely disturbed our friend's mental equilibrium for a time, and I fancy caused his tan-colored horseship an immense amount of satisfaction and merriment, at least until his rider had re-established himself as master of the situation.

It seems that the Treasurer had, for some reason dismounted, and for a moment allowed "Buck" a free rein. This was "Buck's" opportunity to "get even" and he seized it without an instant's hesitation. The Treasurer should have known that confidence placed in "Buckskin" was not well founded, and the moment "Buck" found he was free the fun began. He started off on a tantalizing trot, seeming delighted to match speed with his master, and although the Treasurer put on all speed possible and sprinted along at a "home run" gait, "Buck" was a little the faster. With a vicious kick now and then to evidence his delight and an ugly buck, by which he hoped to dislodge the deer strapped on behind the saddle, he came up the valley with the Treasurer trailing along behind. On they went, for perhaps a couple of miles, "Buck" just keeping out of reach and the Treasurer swallowing and breathing the dust he stirred up for his benefit, together with an occasional wad of gravel his hind feet managed to pelt him with.

We did not learn how the chase ended or what was said or done when our friend regained his mount, but judging from appearances it was reasonable to suppose "Buck" had been given such a severe lesson in horse

ethics, well hammered in and clinched, that his desire to display his depravity was a negligible quantity, at least for the time being.

We ran across numerous turkey signs, about ten o'clock, and decided to stop for a while and locate if possible the place where the turkeys roosted. I was the last one to leave camp and before starting it occurred to me that perhaps it would be a good idea to suggest to Valentine that he make some "flap-jacks," thinking of course if he was versed in the art, that he would make them the same way as I have already described, and which is considered the standard method among prospectors, hunters, cowboys and others. What was our surprise on returning to camp, to find that Valentine knew more about bread making than all of us put together, and as evidence of his skill displayed a pile of "tortillas" (cakes) he had baked, that fairly made our mouths water.

Instead of going at it in the crude way we were familiar with, he made a dough much the same as the housewife does, but instead of rolling it out he would take a small portion and pat it out between his hands, (it is not necessary to state if his hands were clean) in the same manner that the Mexican makes his corn tortilla, the result being that he produced a very edible article much better baked and not so soggy and everlastingly tough as the flap-jack. We crowned Valentine "King of the bread-makers" right then and there, and he modestly bore his honors and maintained his reputation until the end of the trip.



—“and thus equipped we took the trail”

We searched the surrounding country for turkey roosts, but evidently the birds we had seen the evidences of had come from some distance. Wild turkeys select, as a general thing, low spreading pine trees for roosts, and though if impossible to locate the birds when feeding during the day, they can by locating their habitat, be easily bagged after night-fall, when they have gone to roost. A turkey is as reluctant to leave his perch as a chicken, the consequence being that the hunter can get the bird between himself and the star-light, or better yet the moon-light, and shoot until it drops, and notwithstanding the disturbance, its companions rarely leave their perch.

Aside from a red fox I saw, and two deer the Treasurer reported, we sighted no other game, so after partaking of Valentine's tortillas and the usual venison steak and coffee, we packed up again and started on. About three o'clock we jumped two "bucks" near the trail, and immediately, before the rest of us began to think of getting a shot, the Treasurer brought his "Lee Straight pull" into action, the result being we soon had more fresh meat and a proportionately greater load. As evidence of our appreciation, we presented this last accession to Valentine, which he gravely loaded on top of the other deer he already was carrying back of his saddle.

Valentine's mustang was about as large as a Shetland pony, and after completing his load and adjusting himself in his saddle in addition to his coat, rifle, etc., there was but little to be seen of his mount besides legs, tail

and ears. I could not help but remark on the incongruous appearance, and suggested that Valentine could more properly carry the horse, but to our pleasantries he shrugged his shoulders and assured us we need not worry, as his horse was "muy fuerte" (very strong) and so he proved to be, as he carried his enormous load over the roughest trails without the least trouble.

About dusk we reached "four o'clock" camp and after a most enjoyable meal retired to sound slumber and pleasant dreams. Though the next morning, the sun appeared in its usual brilliancy, we seemed to feel the imminence of rain and soon the sky became clouded. We traveled probably six or eight miles to a point near where all indications had pointed on the way over, to good turkey hunting and camped, but no sooner had we unpacked than rain-clouds began to gather, preparatory to a general storm which had been gathering for several days.

We made the usual preparations for rain, stretched the tarpaulin over the rope, placed all our equipment under cover, provided wood in abundance for the camp fire and waited for the storm which soon came and with it disappeared all anticipations of successful turkey shooting. As the previous day had been pleasant, so this day was equally disagreeable. Everything went wrong; the bedding got wet, we waded around in the grass until soaked to the skin and to cap the climax, Valentine's horse strayed away.

A rainy day in camp, especially without adequate pro-

tection, is one that tries a man's soul. One never knows or realizes till he is cold and wet how disagreeable it is possible to feel. Your companions are apt to become so uncongenial to you that it requires an effort to treat them decently, and they at the same time are feeling just as unhappy and are probably forming equally unsatisfactory opinions of yourself. At such times all the mean and selfish traits that the average man is heir to are likely to appear and if the rain and cold continues for a time, a superhuman effort is required to continue on speaking terms even with one's self.

We attempted to eat supper in the rain, but it finally became so violent we were forced to seek the shelter of the improvised tent and there cuddled together like fledglings in a nest in a space about four feet square, soaked to the skin, cross and ugly as bears, almost ready to shoot anyone who would mention deer or turkey, we finished our wet and cold repast.

Our supply of provisions was now beginning to run low. The last meal had exhausted our coffee and from now on we must depend on cocoa, with which we were fortunately supplied. The canned goods were fast disappearing, the potatoes had already vanished and it was clear that unless we soon reached civilization we would be even more destitute of a proper food supply than Colonel Sellers, whose diet consisted of turnips and water, he with sublime courage claiming that the combination

made a most delightful repast, "the turnips" as he said, "absorbing the water and the water the turnips."

Early the following morning, even though it was "dark and dreary" and everything was thoroughly saturated, we packed our soggy stuff on the shivering animals and started over the mountains to the Las Tinajas Cañon and the main traveled road leading to Casas Grandes.

With the fear that I may tire the reader recounting reminiscences of the rat-colored degenerate that the Treasurer rode, I will mention another evidence of his satanic disposition. "Buckskin" had evidently forgotten his severe disciplining of the day before, for no sooner had the Treasurer seated himself in the saddle than his "yellow nibs" tried to throw him out. We were somewhat in advance and knew nothing of the trouble that was brewing until we heard a frightful yelling like a Comanche on the war path and up the trail they came. It was very funny to us, but not so to the rider—in fact he took the matter seriously. "Buck" was humped up into a knot and jumping up and down on his stiff legs with the regularity of a walking beam, while the carcass of the deer was keeping time to the movement as it flapped and hammered around on his posterior extremity. The Treasurer was hanging on as best he could, occasionally hitting the saddle seat and then bounding out again, all the time berating the horse, when not too busy holding on, with a piece of rope and saying things which under the circumstances, though entirely fitting, would not bear



—“all indications had pointed to good turkey hunting”

repeating. If "Buck" had any idea he could unseat the Treasurer, he was most grievously mistaken, for no better rider ever straddled a cayuse in the southwest than he.

While somewhat out of practice and at times rather disturbed by the suddenness of "Buck's" onslaughts, yet they did not alarm him greatly, and only served to call his memory back to the time when his father was agent of the Mescalero Apaches, and as a child he learned from "Three-Fingered Charlie" and other noted scouts and cowboys the intricacies of the "broncho buster's" art.

I would not have it thought that because of the discipline our friend subjected "Buckskin" to at times, he is other than a gentleman of most delightful mien and amiable disposition, but anyone who could associate with "Buck" for ten days and be the victim of his various eccentricities, diabolical tricks and devilish cussedness without exhibiting some human weaknesses should indeed, when done with earthly things, be a candidate for a seat among the most high.

Through the mists and fogs on the mountain tops we slowly wended our way and at last reached the main traveled road in the Tinajas Cañon. We now felt we were back to semi-civilization and with about twenty-five miles before us, we headed for Casas Grandes. During the afternoon we left the Las Tinajas and crossing over a wide mesa, which is used as pasture land by the various Mormon settlements in that vicinity, descended into the Tapiacita Valley.

Night would soon overtake us and as we were about fifteen miles from our destination, with tired pack animals, we decided to stop and finish our journey the following day. We named this camp the "Last Chance," and it was indeed properly named in more ways than one. In the first place it was our last chance to enjoy, though our supply was meagre, a meal of good things prepared by ourselves; secondly we would not soon again have the privilege of enjoying each other's society or listening to Valentine's tales, in his musical Spanish, of life as a cowboy, frontiersman and guide; and last but not least, it would certainly be our last chance to endure the discomforts of sleeping on the damp ground, in wet blankets, with nothing overhead but the clouds, from which fell that night a cold and drizzling rain.

By eleven o'clock the next day we crossed the Casas Grandes river, passed through the town of Colonia Dublan and soon halted our caravan before the dispensary of our friend and patron, Mr. Pink Robertson. The hunting trip was over. Only the memory of a pleasant ten days' outing remained, with six deer as substantial evidence of our success as hunters; and an increased avoirdupois to attest its beneficial and healthful effects. With the recollection of many years' experience on the frontier where I grew to early manhood, during which time I hunted big game in Wyoming and Colorado, I can truthfully say the hunting trip just ended was the most delightful of all.

It would show poor appreciation on my part and a

lamentable lack of the fitness of things were I to close this narrative without expressing myself in the highest terms possible regarding those who were my companions. The success and much of the pleasure of the trip was due to the indefatigable and painstaking efforts, coupled with the most kind consideration and utmost courtesy manifested at all times by the Treasurer, Mr. J. F. Bennett, and his estimable brother, Hilario F.—truly good men to know. May life bring them both its richest rewards is my earnest and sincere wish.

ADDENDUM



FEEL that I would not be justified in closing this volume without making some reference to the evidences throughout the country in which our rambles led us, of a pre-historic civilization.

That Mexico and the southwestern portion of the United States, was in the past inhabited by a people well advanced in the arts and sciences, is a fact proven beyond question, but who these people were, from whence they came or where they went, no one can suggest a satisfactory explanation.

That they were an agricultural people and lived almost entirely by tilling the soil, knew nothing of the working of metals, were not warlike and cared but little for the chase, seems to have been fully established. That they were a domestic people and lived in communities is proven by the ruins of cities and villages found upon the plains and in the mountains. It is undoubtedly true that entirely different civilizations existed at different periods, a race by conquest, pestilence or for some other cause being overcome or destroyed, a more vigorous people occupying the lands, improving, modifying or abandoning the previous civilization, implanting instead, new customs which gradually substituted those of the previous race. The Indian tribes that Coronado, the Spanish explorer, found in the valley of the Gila in the early part of the sixteenth century, knew nothing and had not even tradi-

tionary knowledge of the people who occupied that country in prehistoric times, constructed the great irrigation works, and built the large structure, still standing, known as the Casa Grande (Big House) ruins.

My observations lead me to believe that the same civilization about which Coronado sought information was simultaneous and a part of that further to the South, located in the country now within the boundaries of the present States of Chihuahua and Sonora.

It is a remarkable fact that on the walls of the ruins of some of the ancient houses or nearby rocks, characters similiar in every respect to the Chinese are found. Is it possible that the progenitors or descendants of Confucius came from or found homes in the isolated valleys or beneath the overhanging cliffs of the Sierras? Is it possible that the pure blooded Mexican of today, who claims an ancestry dating back to the ancient Aztec, has a common origin with the pagan of the Celestial Kingdom?

It is not my intention to enter into a discussion of profound problems, which properly belong to the student of ancient civilizations, but I cannot refrain from jotting down in these notes some of the thoughts and suggestions that have occurred to me when investigating and pondering this most interesting subject.

The Montezumas, as these ancient people are called, made large quantities of pottery, which is found in nearly all excavations, and which is shaped much the same as modern Mexican pottery, except that the ollas or water

bottles have short necks, whereas the neck of the Mexican olla is long. They are generally painted a blood red color and baked, rendering them non-porous, but the baking process was not for the purpose of giving or did it have a glazing effect. It is probable that the art of pottery making was more highly developed among certain families or tribes, it being an art not universally understood. There were probably certain sections devoted entirely to its manufacture and artisans highly skilled in the business devoted their entire time to its production. Some years past I visited the Casa Grande ruins in the Gila Valley, near which I found a piece of pottery that was decorated in bright and variegated colors which were entirely covered and protected by a thin coat of transparent glass. This glazing had been done so perfectly that though the pottery had been exposed to the storms and sunshine of the desert for untold centuries, it was as perfect as though but fresh from the potter's kiln. This specimen was different from any that I have ever seen, that have been found in Chihuahua, though it is possible a wider experience would indicate its manufacture was as well understood in that section as further north in the Gila Valley.

In the Arros Cañon, about one hundred and twenty-five miles from Casas Grandes, a place I have not yet visited, I am informed on reliable authority, extensive ruins of ancient dwellings have been found, one house alone it is stated, having probably one hundred rooms.

Skeletons are found in abundance, those of the adult indicating a height of about five feet eight inches. The bones of the hands and feet are generally small and of a delicate refined appearance. In nearly every instance the excavations of burial places have revealed the body lying in a reclining position, the head resting on a block of wood, hollowed out to receive it. The knees are brought up against the chest, and generally the body is wrapped in three grades of matting; the first next the body, closely resembling the material from which gunny sacks are made, of vegetable fibres; the second covering enveloping the first, of reeds and grass, and the outer much the same, of coarse strands about the third of an inch in width.

Generally, two or three ollas are found in each grave, placed beside the head, one containing pinole, another beans and the third beads and trinkets. In some instances corn on the cob, closely resembling our popcorn is found in the third olla.

They used bows and arrows, the latter in some cases being tipped with deer skin. Reeds were used for the arrows, which were burned to give them a hardening effect. Flint arrow heads, such as the Indians of the present day are acquainted with, were evidently unknown, or if so, were not used for some reason not apparent.

Ruins of houses are found in different localities; in some instances in the open country on the banks of

creeks and arroyas, and in the rough mountainous country under sheltering cliffs, the projecting ledges of rock forming the roof.

I have noticed in many places large areas laid off and marked by rows of rock in straight lines forming rectangular and square enclosures, the space enclosed in some instances being extensive, in others small but in every case being geometrically correct, evidencing a knowledge of directions and mathematics. With what object these delineations were made, no one with whom I have ever discussed the subject would even venture an answer.

The science of irrigation was well understood and practiced, not only in the restricted areas in the mountains, but in the large valleys of the plains country, wherever an adequate water supply could be obtained. The old canals can in many places still be traced and in some instances, in the construction of modern irrigation systems, it has been found expedient to re-establish the ancient waterway, the gradients being exactly suited to the requirements of modern engineering practice. That they were an idolatrous people there can be no question, as stone images have been found in abundance by excavators. The inherent recognition of man's responsibility to an Omnipotent Creator, probably also found expression in the adoration and worship of the Sun, their religion being similar to that of the Aztec and the Incas.

The chief food supply was evidently corn, and it was prepared for use in much the same manner as the peon

prepares his "tortillas" (corn-cakes) at the present time. The Montezuma knew nothing of mechanical appliances and as the horse was entirely unknown, it not being introduced into America until the Spanish conquest, he was compelled to cultivate his crops, prepare his food and make his clothes entirely by manual labor, not having the assistance of man's most faithful friend to cultivate his fields, turn his grinding mill or roll the tanner's wheel. Probably the most laborious and never-ending task of the house-wife of those days, was the grinding of the corn which was all done in "metates" (stone mills) by hand.

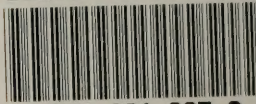
I had the pleasure and satisfaction of finding one of these ancient mills and its examination proved most interesting. It was made of lava rock, about fourteen inches long by the same in width, trough shaped, open at one end, closed at the other and probably about eight inches deep inside by ten inches outside. In using the metate, the operator places it between the knees and taking an ellipsoidal shaped rock six or eight inches long, in both hands, by continuous rubbing and grinding gradually reduces the corn to a fine pulp or powder. When the housewife of long ago first began grinding in our metate, it was simply a rectangular shaped piece of lava-rock and only by the wear consequent to the grinding was it shaped into its present form.

Remembering the hardness of the rock and the infinitesimal abrasion of the grinding operation it is possible

perhaps to form a faint conception of the centuries of effort necessary to give our metate its present shape. Probably enough human power was expended and corn ground, in giving form to this metate to furnish an empire with tortillas for many decades.

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